AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently amended) A method for diagnosing leukemia, pre-leukemia or aleukemic malignant blood diseases wherein stem cell growth factor (SCGF) in an in-vivo sample is quantified, wherein the method comprises:

obtaining an in-vivo patient sample from a patient suspected of having leukemia, pre-leukemia or aleukemic malignant blood disease;

contacting the patient sample with one or more anti-SCGF antibodies;

detecting and/or quantifying SCGF present in the patient sample in an immunological assay; thereby obtaining a patient sample SCGF value;

comparing the patient sample SCGF value to a SCGF cut-off value;

wherein the SCGF cut-off value is set based on one or more individuals that do not have leukemia, pre-leukemia, or aleukemic malignant blood disease; and

diagnosing leukemia, pre-leukemia or aleukemic malignant blood disease if the patient sample SCGF value is above the SCGF cut-off value;

wherein the leukemia is acute lymphocytic leukemia (ALL), acute myeloid leukemia (AML), or chronic myeloid leukemia (CML), and the pre-leukemia is myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS), and the aleukemic malignant blood disease is non-Hodgkin's lymphoma (NHL) or multiple myeloma (MM).

2. - 6. (Cancelled)

7. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the immunological assay is a sandwich assay.

8. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 7, wherein two different anti-SCGF antibodies are used in the sandwich assay, wherein the two different anti-SCGF antibodies react with different epitopes of stem cell growth factor (SCGF).

9. (Original) The method according to claim 8, wherein the antibodies are selected from polyclonal and monoclonal antibodies.

10. (Previously amended) The method according to claim 9, wherein at least one of the antibodies is a monoclonal antibody, and wherein the at least one monoclonal antibody is selected from a monoclonal antibody recognizing the region shown by the amino acid sequence of residues 6-28 of SEQ. ID No. 1, a monoclonal antibody recognizing the region shown by the amino acid sequence of residues 29-59 of SEQ. ID No. 1, and a monoclonal antibody recognizing the region shown by the amino acid sequence of residues 60-302 of SEQ. ID No. 1.

11. - 20. (Cancelled)

21. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the SCGF cut-off value is set by

obtaining one or more in-vivo normal samples from one or more individuals that do not have leukemia, pre-leukemia, or aleukemic malignant blood disease;

contacting the one or more normal samples with one or more anti-SCGF antibodies;

detecting and/or quantifying SCGF present in the one or more normal samples in an immunological assay; thereby obtaining one or more normal sample SCGF values; and

setting the SCGF cut-off value based on the one or more normal sample SCGF values.

22. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the in-vivo sample is selected from blood, urine, spinal fluid, and puncture fluid.

23. (Currently amended) The method of claim 22, wherein the in-vivo sample is blood, and the blood is selected from whole blood, plasma, and serum.

24. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the SCGF cut-off value is 18.2 ng/ml.

25. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the SCGF cut-off value is 15.0 ng/ml.

26. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the SCGF cut-off value is 13.0 ng/ml.

27. (Previously presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the at least one monoclonal antibody is a monoclonal antibody recognizing the region shown by the amino acid sequence of residues 6-28 of SEQ. ID No. 1, wherein the monoclonal antibody is KM2142 produced by hybridoma FERM BP-7922.

28. (Previously presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the at least one monoclonal antibody is a monoclonal antibody recognizing the region shown by the amino acid sequence of residues 29-59 of SEQ. ID No. 1, wherein the monoclonal antibody is KM2804 produced by hybridoma FERM BP-7923.

29. (Previously presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the at least one monoclonal antibody is a monoclonal antibody recognizing the region shown by the amino acid sequence of residues 60-302 of SEQ. ID No. 1, wherein the monoclonal antibody is KM2945 produced by hybridoma FERM BP-7924.

30. - 41. (Cancelled)